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THOUGHTS
ON THE
PRESENT WAR.

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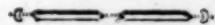


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THOUGHTS
ON THE
PRESENT WAR.
WITH
AN IMPARTIAL REVIEW
OF
LORD NORTH'S ADMINISTRATION,
IN CONDUCTING
THE AMERICAN, FRENCH, SPANISH,
AND DUTCH WAR;
AND IN
THE MANAGEMENT OF CONTRACTS, TAXES,
THE PUBLIC MONEY, &c.

L O N D O N :

PRINTED FOR CHARLES DILLY, IN THE POULTRY.



M.DCC.LXXXIII.

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PRESENT WAR.

AN IMPARTIAL REVIEW

LORD NORTH'S ADMINISTRATION



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AND OTHER WARS.

THE MANAGEMENT OF CONTRACTS, TAXES,
THE PUBLIC DEBT, &c.

PRINTED FOR CHARLES DART, IN THE CITY.

MILKING

ADVERTISEMENT.

THESE pages contain the Sentiments of a Clergyman, who resides in a distant part of the kingdom, communicated to a friend near the metropolis. This circumstance may apologize for some inaccuracies. The Reader will please to observe, that they were written during the late administration of the Marquis of Rockingham; whose measures, it is hoped, are not set aside in consequence of his decease.

ADVERTISEMENT.

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the Kingdom, communicated to a friend near
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during the late manifestation of the Malicious
of Birmingham; which, however, it is hoped,
are not far off in consequence of his death.

THOUGHTS

ON THE

PRESENT WAR.

WHEN the word of a master can dictate what is right and what is wrong, it is almost indifferent to the people, who is to form the plans at home, or who is to execute them abroad; having no interest in the government, they do not much trouble themselves about the administration of it. But in such a country as ours, where the laws rule, all have a concern in public affairs. Men labour their fields for themselves; their houses are safe from force, their children are free, and the magistrate dares not touch them when they injure no body.

This is an apology for such attempts as the present. A man of low rank, and of a retired way of life, may feel for his country, and may wish to convey his feelings to others. Though he give no information to the statesman, or knowledge to the philosopher, he may give hints to men on his own level, or bring back to their remembrance, thoughts that were once familiar to them.

At this time, in particular, we are all called upon, when our country hath experienced a great reverse of fortune. Her power, lately, reached round the globe; and her glory was not exceeded by that

2 THOUGHTS ON THE PRESENT WAR.

of the nations of classic times. The scene is changed indeed; and we may be allowed to speak with freedom, of the manner in which this change has been effected. If the best had been done, we should have had cause for despair; but if things have been improperly managed, there are hopes of better times, whenever they shall be conducted in a different manner.

We must acknowledge, that at first, something like the voice of the people was heard in favour of the American war. Boroughs, cities, and counties, strove who should be warmest in their addresses on this subject: we know what artifices were practised by Ministers to attain this their desirable end. But the same spirit appeared even in private companies, where their influence did not reach. Persons were not wanting who spoke with warmth of the claims of England, and of the ingratitude of America; and who affected to spurn at the indignity of any thing short of unconditional submission. Such language was to be heard in the city and in the country, among the lower as well as the higher ranks; it was held on the bench, and in the senate. The pulpit, that should always preach peace, was often made the trumpet of war. Those who were against violent measures, were exposed to abuse, and pointed out as unfriendly to their country.

The Ministry did not force the people into the war; they are however to be blamed for keeping back information: and in this they are much to be blamed. It was only the first session of parliament, during this melancholy dispute, that papers were produced, and these imperfect ones. From this time, the most important measures were taken on the word of a Minister, as if he had spoken with the voice of an oracle.

THOUGHTS ON THE PRESENT WAR. 3

Coercive measures were adopted without due deliberation. The port of Boston was shut; the fishing restrained; the government altered; some trials were to be across the Atlantic; absolute power was established in Canada; and as the times became hot, our temper became violent; till by seizing their ships, we declared that they were to be considered as foreign enemies. Men of great name opposed these passionate laws, and foretold all the evil this unhappy quarrel hath brought upon us; but they were not believed. Good fortune had banished moderation; and they, who had been so often conquerors, thought they could not be defeated. We were trained to conquest in the time of Mr. Pitt; he saw every thing yield to him: at the opening of his mouth, or the waving of his finger, victory moved east or west. His views were great, his resolution determined, and he despised money: but his greatness and success led him to dictate. Without his greatness or success, our Ministers did dictate; and they were unequal to the attempt. The club of Hercules, or the spear of Achilles, did not suit a weak arm. If they had used those arts abroad, which they had often used successfully at home, all might have been well. If soothing and insinuation had taken the place of threats and votes of passion; if interest had been applied to the selfish, if honour to the vain; if we had winked at what we could not help; if we had assumed the mild air of peace, rather than the noisy bluster of war; we and they might, for ages, have been one people, a powerful and happy people.

We should have remembered, that there are rights which it is improper to examine; rights acquired by habit, opinion, or the strong hand. These rights, when narrowly enquired into, lead

4 THOUGHTS ON THE PRESENT WAR.

to considerations which prudence wishes to avoid. Of this sort were the disputes with the Colonies. It was dangerous to move this question; for who saw where it was to end? The piercing eye of the earl of Chatham saw the danger at a distance, and described it as if it had been past; but the blind politicians of that day called him the prophet of evil.

We had, first, to determine the justice of our claim; then, the expediency of it. The general cry was, that America belonged to us; that we might bind, or loose; put a heavy or light burden on it. But was this claim expedient? Was the sword to be drawn to enforce a frivolous duty? Oh that the spirit of peace had gone out that day among the people, to turn brother to brother! If this spirit had prevailed, and not the fiend of contention, all would have been well. Though many were unreasonable in America, they were not all so. They must have seen the ruin these troubles were to bring on the merchant and farmer; the seizing of their ships, the pillaging of their fields, and burning of their cities. They were without ammunition or arms, and had not money to buy them. Some of them might hope for independence, many might wish for it; but they were not so blind to their own interest, as not to observe the danger of the struggle. It has been repeatedly asserted, that from the first, independence was their object; yet during seven years, we have not been able to bring a shadow of proof that it was so. Their having no arms, stores, or foreign connections, strongly prove, that shaking off their dependance on the mother country did not then form any part of their plan. They do not even seem to have adopted this idea at the time the sword was drawn. The considering
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THOUGHTS ON THE PRESENT WAR. 5

them as foreign enemies, by condemning their ships, seems to have been the immediate cause of the vote of independence.

When that contest was in its infancy, our Ministers were ignorant of the strength of the country which they had undertaken to subdue. They pushed on with unadvised keenness; one severity followed another, as if we did not think their love worth the having, but wanted to govern them by fear, the principle of despotism. Would it not have been wise to have considered how difficult it is to hold the lash over the heads of men who live more than three thousand miles from us; and how useless such a dominion would have been? The sword causes famine and disease, and dries up the sources of trade and revenue. Peace raises cities in the wilderness; war made Babylon and Nineveh a wilderness. What trade or taxes could ruined farms and a beggared people have afforded?

Our Ministers affirmed, that the resistance was to be inconsiderable, and soon over. They said, too, that the Colonies would not be united in this as a common cause: it was even suggested, that the Boston act would give joy to other towns, who were to come in for their trade. We soon discovered that these hopes were vain. Upon the news of the obnoxious acts, the New Englanders did not break out into rage, but resolved to do every thing in concert with the other governments. Each of the provinces chose a provincial congress, which again sent delegates to the continental one. This meeting, too, did nothing in a passion. Their resolutions were long kept secret; and when published, we saw nothing like a disorderly assembly: their language was smooth and insinuating; the arguments plausible; the address engaging: but they
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6 THOUGHTS ON THE PRESENT WAR.

were firm, and determined in refusing the new acts.

We were made to believe, on the authority of military commanders, that the insurrection was a mobbish riot, in which few were concerned, except the meanest of the people, who might be quelled with ease. From this, and other circumstances, we learn, that though the soldier does his own duty, yet it is unsafe to form political opinions upon his authority, as he is too much disposed to think meanly of the courage of the man of peace. We were, an hundred times, informed that this was a cowardly mob. Yet sometimes truth forces her way to the people, though the interested want to conceal her. One of the governors was very free in these assertions of reproach; yet, when off his guard, he writes that every Justice of Peace in the province was a Committee-man. Were not these gentlemen named by the crown, and men of property and influence? Were the other Colonies less irritated than Virginia? New England was believed to have been in worse temper than Virginia. What reason had our officers abroad, or our Ministers at home, for spreading the notion, that the low people only were displeased at the claim of the Mother Country?

They shewed an address beyond what men of mean education could have possessed, and which proved that the evil was indeed deep. Crowds entered the associations of the Americans, the counter-associations for Government were weak and ineffectual. It would have been fair to have told us these things as they were: but the plot was to make us believe, that the moment a force should appear, they would throw down their arms, and pray for mercy. On this ground their petitions
were

were not so much as read, but were rejected with scorn and insult. It was said, that the national dignity would be hurt by receiving petitions from subjects in arms. But they had offered petitions before they were in arms, and a plea of dignity may be a plea of pride; and, if there is to be no substantial loss from concessions, pride is too slight a cause for shedding of blood. The dignity of Philip would not allow him to receive the petitions of his revolted subjects: the consequence was, he lost the seven provinces. If Henry IV. had acted from the same principle, it is probable he never would have been king of France. The great men of that kingdom had practised upon the superstition of the people, had been the head of a bloody league, and committed every sort of excess. In modern language, his dignity could not treat with them, till they threw themselves at his feet, intreating mercy. But that wise prince, first, granted the demands of one chief; then, of another, he forgave all from the heart; was the father of the people; and from that day treated them, as if there never had been a quarrel.

The yielding, in time, to necessity, is a sign of wisdom, and still more so is the yielding with such a grace that it may rather seem a favour than the effect of force. To stand upon punctilio is weak in private life, why should it not be weak in states? Our Ministers have granted Ireland, what they had refused to America. Small advantages had been refused them one year; their spirit grew daring from hard usage; they extended their views; insisted for an open trade, a privilege which no free nation ought to want; and though we had refused a small indulgence one year, we were obliged to grant a great one the next. If we had taken the course with them

8 THOUGHTS ON THE PRESENT WAR.

we had taken with America, it is plain what would have followed. Ministers themselves seemed to have adopted this idea, on the first proposal for reconciliation with America. We offered terms, though they were in arms; but before it was known what effect this proposal could have, one offensive act followed another, with increasing severity, as if we had meant to convince them that the offers of reconciliation were not sincere.

Though it was believed that this country had a right to make laws for America, yet we ought to have considered, that it required great power to have made them effectual. Let us observe,

1. That we had not a sufficient force. It was said that an American durst not look at a red coat. The senator held this language in the senate, and the general at the head of an army. It passed for a maxim, and it was thought scepticism to have doubted it. Every subaltern on half pay thought himself qualified for subduing America. Cæsar was not more rapid than they were to be; they were to come, see, and conquer a continent. Rivers, swamps, mountains, crowds of men in arms, all dangers by flood or field, were not in the least to stop their course. If any man said otherwise, the finger was pointed at him as to an enemy of his country. In this persuasion, the force sent out was small. General Gage believed he could stare out of countenance the militia of the provinces. He made the trial in summer 1774 upon the militia of Boston. He attempted to strike a blow, and thought their hearts were to fail at the sight of his regiment. The experiment did not answer, and his threats were considered as empty boasts. Though at that time their force was small, and undisciplined, general Gage was not able to disperse them. When
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all America was arming, we had not three thousand men to oppose them : and we thought we had enough. There were no levies at home ; a few weak regiments were to be sent abroad ; German troops were not then thought of.

Now, since the war was to be carried on, Ministers ought to have employed an adequate force ; and not to have trusted to ill grounded suppositions. They should not have expected to find the Americans cowardly. It is not wisdom to despise an enemy. It was not safe to have trusted that thousands were to join us. If they had done so, it would have been clear gain : if not, we should have succeeded by our own strength. It had been better to have believed them to have been brave, and lovers of freedom, and to have made our preparations accordingly. Though brave, they were undisciplined, had neither arms nor ammunition, and with a proper force, might, at that time, have been crushed.

But, upon our plan, time was given for making ready, for forming foreign treaties, and for concerting a proper method of defence. We thought by raising a few slight fortifications at Boston, that New England must have fallen ; and the rest of America have followed. We shewed a genius in contriving severe laws, but we had no anxiety about a force to give them effect.

2. We did not encourage those who shewed an inclination of returning to their duty. Though we had lately suspended the legislature of New York, the assembly of that province, forgetting this treatment, refused to acknowledge the Congress ; petitioned to be relieved from some grievances, and declared their resolution of continuing united with Britain. This rising return of affec-

20 THOUGHTS ON THE PRESENT WAR.

tion should not have been discouraged. It was a promising opening, and great things were expected from it. Who could have believed that Ministers were to turn their faces against it? It was deficient in some form. The peace of England, and the happiness of America were to be sacrificed to forms. Forms are the strong holds where the friends of old oppression defend themselves. If our fathers had not broken through forms, we should never have had the Revolution. The people judge by their feelings; and if they, who have it in their power, will not loose the twistings of this knot, they are ready to cut it asunder with the sword. A province separated might have determined the dispute; a central province, which would break the communication between the North and South. A great opportunity was lost, the petition was not read, and we parted with the province for a punctilio. Did not this look, as if we would not admit of any thing short of having America at our feet, in the posture of surrendering at discretion.

In states, as well as in private families, the first return of affection is to be watched. In most quarrels, both parties are to be blamed: therefore each is to forgive, if he desires peace. And if for want of these compliances a man draws a distressing law-suit on himself, he may perhaps be called a man of spirit, but he cannot be praised for temper or prudence. He ruins himself from humour, and squanders the bread of his children to gratify pride and revenge. Quarrels of states follow the same rule. Though one makes a step forward, if the other stands still, peace cannot be restored, till one or the other be destroyed, root and branch. Did we not foresee, that in striking at an American,

THOUGHTS ON THE PRESENT WAR. II

rican, our son or brother might get a deadly wound? We rejected every offer with disdain; and our excuse was, that these offers were insincere. By encouraging them, we should have made their deceit plain, or we should have profited if they were from the heart: by rejecting them at short-hand, they loudly complain of our harshness; and foreigners think the cause of the quarrel is with us.

Pains and forfeitures were spoken of. The Gazette gave countenance to this notion by publishing a letter of General Gage, where he writes, "that they were destined to the cord." Ethan Allen was put in irons. This also was a strong hint of what was designed against them. From this high tone of authority they were brought down by the threats of reprisals. Some days before the action at Bunker's hill, General Gage offered indemnity to such as should lay down their arms. His proclamation had been proper if time had been given. In the proclamation of the year 1745, several weeks were allowed for the laying down of arms. There was sense in the one proclamation, but not in the other. Many days must have passed before some of the insurgents could have heard of it. Then it would be useless, as there was not one day allowed for their coming in. An exception was made of two men, who would have had the most influence in determining their countrymen to refuse or accept the indemnity. This of itself was enough to have made the proclamation an idle paper. The General never could have done this of himself. They were to blame who gave him their instructions.

Certain portions of land were promised to the emigrants. Were these to have come from forfeitures? if so, did not Ministers declare their intention too early? Might not the fear of confiscations and at-

12 THOUGHTS ON THE PRESENT WAR.

tainders have made the colonists more inveterate; when they believed they had to fight for life and fortune?

3. We were not explicit in the terms we offered. Earl Chatham proposed a bill for quieting their disturbances, the basis of which was giving up taxation as a matter of right, and expecting from their gratitude, a contribution for the support of the Empire. But this bill was rejected, and rejected in such a way as ought not to have been done; when we consider the greatness of the man, the service he had done, and the prepossessions of America in favour of any measure recommended by him. He had once laid the storm, he might have laid it again: but unfortunately for us and them he was not heard. The sword was to be unsheathed, and to the sword we had resolved to appeal.

In a few days a resolution more exceptionable came from another quarter, where it did not promise success, and liable to the objection that the taxes proposed, were to proceed from fear, and not from public spirit, the principle of free men; and it was unknown how much or how little could procure their peace. This was a humbling state for the sons of Englishmen, and the pride of their origin would have made them not to have taken the word of command with the lash over their backs.

Till this resolution had been taken, the language of our great men was, that the dispute was not about Revenue, but the Supremacy of Parliament. This was the first court creed. But from the date of that motion their language changed, and a standing revenue was to be insisted on, in order (as they wheedlingly said) to lighten the burden of the citizen, and country gentlemen. In this state of the dispute they should have balanced profit and loss.

America

America could not have been conquered without adding 30,000,000 l. to our debt, and 1,500,000 l. to our taxes. They must have been kept in subjection by force; forts were to be built; posts established; an army must have been ready to take the field upon the rumour of an insurrection. What an excuse for swelling the ordinaries, and extraordinaries of the army, navy, and ordinance? Could all this be reckoned at less than 1,500,000 l. more? We must add the sum they were to raise for lightening our burdens. Put this down at 1,000,000 l. Could even the hand of a Vizier have squeezed 4,000,000 l. yearly from America, wasted by war; and governed by the bayonet? Should not they have calculated their bargain, before they had plunged the nation in blood? However clear the right might have been, our own interest should have prevented the trial, as we were certain of throwing away a crown for the chance of gaining sixpence. They indeed who boasted, that with three regiments they were to reduce them, might expect that with half a million they could effectuate the conquest; and that very little might preserve it. We have reason to say, that great was their faith, but we need not envy their foresight.

4. We were brought into the war, and kept in it by interested men of that very country. By Governor Hutchinson's letters, it appears, that very early he advised to alter the government of the Massachusset's. He advised the taking of power from the people, and the giving of it to the crown, a doctrine very agreeable to courts! This doctrine I hope will always be received here with distrust. The proposed new moulding of their constitution was long before the tea-riot: and when that riot took place, if he had acted
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14 THOUGHTS ON THE PRESENT WAR.

like the other governors, it is probable there would not have been a serious quarrel. This hand put a match to the mine, the blowing up of which hath covered a great part of America and Europe with ruins. Upon his authority the Boston Port Act was passed. Though it was of the nature of a criminal accusation, we called no witnesses to prove the charge; we gave them no opportunity of vindicating themselves, as had been usual in former acts concerning riots: this act was the beginning of all the misfortunes of this country.

Permit me to name another American, though he did not come upon the stage at this period. This Gentleman had been a leader for many years. He is now supposed to have been a great adviser of severity. He was a member of the Congress, though on his examination here, he forgot what votes he had given on the question of Independence. This was a surprizing want of memory in a man of so great abilities. He came over to the British standard, when the affairs of the Congress were at the lowest ebb, upon the loss of Fort Washington, and the reduction of the Jerseys. He was employed in a place of trust by Sir William Howe, but when Sir William was under a cloud at court, he forgot his old friend, and declared for his enemies. His language was, that nine in ten of the Americans were well affected to Britain, if they had not been kept back by force. Now after the reduction of Charles-town, there was no considerable rebel force in the province, to hinder them from joining our army. Yet as soon as a body of Americans had advanced, the militia that had joined us, went off by entire battalions. Fabricius affirms, that Earl Cornwallis might have armed a greater force than had ever obeyed

obeyed the Congress. What evidence have we that his story has any bottom? Have we not evidence that it has none?

When we mention refugees, we must take notice of one, who lately came to this country, and who, they say, was much consulted. Was there reason for that confidence? Does his former life plead for him? Was he not inveterate for years? Was he not condemned at home before he thought of changing sides? It is not easy to judge favourably of such sudden changes. Do all these things plead for the great attention given to his advice? The impropriety will be overlooked of mentioning these men earlier than the period in which they appeared. I proceed,

- I. To consider the American war.
- II. The war with France and Spain.
- III. The Dutch war.
- IV. The management of the public money.

We have to observe that the public accounts of the war are defective. Formerly the Gazette neither magnified our victories, nor lessened our defeats. But in this war, the design seems to have been to conceal our affairs. Mangled accounts are given on many occasions, sometimes they are entirely suppressed; they promised accounts which never were communicated, and hearsay stories were given for authentic. The greatest losses are hurried over in a few lines, and the most pompous accounts are given of the most trifling successes. These are a few out of many instances; these shew that private accounts must make up for the defects, or partiality of the public ones. After this preface we proceed to our reflections on the American war.

I. The

16 THOUGHTS ON THE PRESENT WAR.

I. The first serious trial was at Bunker's Hill. This convinced us how ill grounded the hopes were of reducing them by a small force. How great was the slaughter, in making a part of the troops of New England change their ground? General Gage, in his proclamation, seemed confident of dispersing them, and is pleased to ridicule their military parade. We had been taught to expect an universal submission, when the first musket should be presented. What disappointment did the dispatch bring? Who could have believed that they were for so many months to confine our troops upon a narrow unhealthful neck of land. We were now told, that the army could not move from Boston, till it should be relieved by great reinforcements. We were convicted of hasty judgment; it had been happy if this had led us to caution. But Ministers did not profit by this trial of fortune. They had been in use of talking big, their passions were now on fire at their disappointment, prudence was forgotten, revenge pursued, and they pushed on rather with the warm temper of young soldiers, than with the cool deliberation of old counsellors.

There was yet an opening for reconciliation. Mr. Penn was sent over with the last petition of America. Though a friend to Government, he gave an account entirely different from what they had been accustomed to hear. Those who flattered them, alledged that there was no concert among the Americans, that they were a rope of sand. Mr. Penn said otherwise; unfortunately, the dangers he described were not believed to have been real.

Intercessors however were not wanting for peace; men of information and experience, the friends of both countries: but their words had no weight; truth and eloquence were for them, yet
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THOUGHTS ON THE PRESENT WAR. 17

rash assertions, and far fetched conclusions carried the day. They saw the difficulties of the country, its morasses, passes, and forests; the inhabited country formidable for its numbers; the wilderness still more formidable for being without inhabitants. If we kept near the coast, the inland country was safe; if we advanced into the country, we were in danger of starving. The advocates for peace insisted on these topics. Their warnings were slighted as the raving of melancholy, or the forboding of disaffection. The last offer of peace was rejected with haughtiness, as the rest had been.

While the blockade of Boston continued, we began to make larger preparations: levies were going on: regiments were marching to the coast: they had orders for embarkation one week, they had counter orders the next, they had third and fourth orders; rashness one day occasioned irresolution another. Every German prince, who had men to sell, was applied to; large subsidies were given; old claims, that had been rejected upon enquiry, were sustained without enquiry, and the highest price given to these lords of mercenaries, who draw their revenues from the blood of their subjects.

Nothing could be done by possessing Boston. This town is under command in many points: it lies at the bottom of a bay, which is difficult of access in winter; the victuallers were driven to the West Indies: and the artillery from the rising ground kept all in alarm. A famine was apprehended, therefore General Howe was obliged to leave Boston in a tempestuous time of the year, when the worst consequences were to be dreaded from the voyage. What opinion then are we to form of our having fixed on Boston as a post? Our hatred-run

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18 THOUGHTS ON THE PRESENT WAR.

highest against the New Englanders; and we had resolved to make them first feel the weight of our vengeance. But it was soon found that New England was the worst to conquer, and from that time, no army of ours hath been four days together, on this part of the continent. We turned from those who had been the first fomentors of the troubles, and against whom we had expressed most passion. How different this from what we had expected?

2. If the force was too small, this evil was made worse by slack discipline. To reconcile the Americans to us, the army should have been kept under the strictest discipline. The hand of a soldier should never be felt but in the field: they ought to have been the protectors of the houses of their friends, for their love to the cause; and of those of their enemies, to try if by kind usage they could be made friends. But our army was not so exemplary. They pillaged, without distinction of friend or enemy. The most zealous refugees acknowledge this charge, and regret it as a most unhappy circumstance. This made our friends less our friends, and our enemies more our enemies. Too great severity was used after some advantages; and particularly on night surprizes; there seemed to have been more shedding of blood than was necessary, or usual. At Tapan, Egg harbour, and Stone Arabia, scarcely any prisoners were made, though the slaughter had been great. It is to be hoped that this did not proceed from the officers in any other way, than by their not punishing the first steps to an irregular conduct. However that was, no regular army has at any time been more ready to stretch out their hands to plunder. The accounts published by authority of Congress, may have been exaggerated, though some of them
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THOUGHTS ON THE PRESENT WAR. 19

are very particular, and it was justice to our national character to have confuted them, if they were false. Our own accounts of General Vaughan's expedition up the North River, of those on the Mohawk at Wyomey, and all Butler's and Brandt's excursions, were not calculated for reconciling America, but for making the breach wider, and the animosity greater from their own feelings, and from the reports of their friends. Their leaders were disposed to spread every report to our disadvantage: and when the fact could not be denied, how much must it not have fomented their discontents? They did not love us before, but this made their hatred blaze from Hallifax to St. Augustine's. These severities could have little effect as severities, as we had not the power of touching one of a hundred; but they made the contest more deadly. The flames of Æsopus, in the North, must have put their passions on fire at Savannah, in the South. The story would be described with all the force of colouring, their rage would be roused, and they would avoid a connection with those who plundered their houses, destroyed their farms, and burnt their churches.

These things were known at home: our leaders are to blame, because they did nothing to prevent them, by bringing the guilty to punishment. By giving their countenance to men who executed these harsh measures, they became a party in them, and made those who had been friendly, or neutral, more violent, on account of their sufferings, than the first movers of the dispute. We pursued plans of harshness and used words of reproach, when we ought to have been forward in the field, reserved in the closet, modest in our words, without our-

20 THOUGHTS ON THE PRESENT WAR.

rage, taunt, or insult, in our conduct: for harsh or boasting words are a sign of mean sentiments.

3. Hurt was done by sending the reinforcements at an improper season. Activity is proper in every war, it is absolutely necessary in an insurrection. Insurgents at first may be without a head; they have no plan, no concert; every one justles his neighbour; the weakest is the loudest; the worst proposal has most votes: noise and uproar take the lead: if at this time you strike and follow the blow, they are easily scattered. In time the fermentation settles. Order comes out of confusion. They find they are a weak body, without a head: the common danger makes them submit to him who has most address in preventing difficulties, and most resolution in encountering them. We gave the colonies leisure to concert their schemes. The disease that might have been easily removed at first, we made incurable by delay.

In the year 1775, an attack was made on two sides of Canada. Two weak regiments were in the province. The reinforcement which sailed about the end of September, would have had to sail up the river St. Lawrence, at the very season when the wind blows down, and makes the passage to Quebec impracticable. A storm drove them back, which saved them from greater danger. Ought the defence of the province to have been put off, till it had been desperate to have undertaken it? To balance this, and lay our fears, the Gazette informed us, that the invaders of Canada were mouldering away by desertion and disease; and that the province probably was soon to be free of them. In a week after this declaration, we had
certain

THOUGHTS ON THE PRESENT WAR. 21

certain information that St. John's, Montreal, and the upper provinces had surrendered.

General Howe reached Staten Island early in July 1776. There he had to spend six weeks in inaction, till the troops from Europe had joined him. They might have joined him in May or June, but none of them appeared till past the middle of August. Mr. Pitt had every expedition at its destination in the season proper for the climate: at Louisburgh, and Quebeck in June: at Guadaloupe, and Martinico in January. The first reinforcement joined General Howe in August, the last in October. The general has been blamed, when perhaps his employers were more to be blamed. He gained a victory on Long Island in August, took New York in September, beat the Provincials at the White Plains in October, took Fort Washington in November, established himself in the Jerseys, but it was then too late, on account of the weather, to push on to Philadelphia, across the Delawar.

In February, 1776, there was a great rising of loyalists in North Carolina. General Clinton was expected from Boston; Earl Cornwallis and six regiments, from Europe. But they had not set sail when they ought to have been in Carolina. The insurrection was quashed, and the fairest opportunity of continental support lost by the old spirit of delay. Their friends had been dispersed three months before the troops arrived. Fifteen hundred had assembled, and if our troops had come at the time appointed, they might have been joined by many thousands. The loyalists were left to their own fate. They were to be pitied who depending on our promises, threw themselves into danger.

There

There were several other instances of our suffering by the lateness of our preparations.

4. The expedition by the lakes went upon bad information, and could not have answered the design of it.

In October, 1776, General Carleton destroyed the ships on the Lake, but the season was too far advanced for doing any thing more.

Nothing could have been more vigorous than General Burgoyne's first appearance. It had been given out that we had many staunch friends on these frontiers; who panted for an opportunity of rising against the tyranny of the Congress. It was believed that he had only to stamp with his foot, and that legions would start up to fight our battles. The Americans, in the greatest confusion left their magazines, artillery, and the fort in which they had trusted much. Such a defeat must have led them to despair of their cause. A clear defeat causes a great desertion in a regular army: it often disperses irregulars; especially if there are any lurking seeds of disaffection. But there were no desertions here, and they never could have had a fairer opportunity. They had not the bayonet of the Congress at their breast, they had six or seven thousand victorious troops to protect them. Yet after all, where were the thousands who were to flock to our standard? This was a proof that we had few friends. The General himself seems to have expected more from their fear, than their love. The scalping knife, the tomahawk, the burning of houses, and the extermination of the inhabitants are the chief topicks of his proclamation. Neither threats, nor soothing filled his ranks. Might not this trial have made us distrust the Refugees, who had asserted that nine in ten were our firm friends?

The

THOUGHTS ON THE PRESENT WAR. 23

The General advanced flushed with victory; the inhabitants closed behind him, and broke his communication with the country he had left. He soon was opposed by a superior force of that very country, where he was to have filled up his provincial regiments. They attacked veterans, and in every thing, were the reverse of what they had been a few weeks before. With these facts it is surprizing, that Ministers should, for years, have maintained, we had so many friends, so few enemies. The Refugees found that court favour depended on this doctrine; therefore they held forth upon it, in season, and out of season.

This conduct was natural to them: the wonder is, that the affairs of a great nation should have been influenced by such interested counsel. They have been well paid for their trouble, are grateful to their paymasters, and as bold as ever in their assertions. The mention of General Burgoyne brought them again before us, as the continuance of the war is laid to their charge. If facts were ever against rash assertions, we have a cloud of witnesses to prove, that they either were misled, or did mislead.

Upon this misfortune we were informed, we were to have a war of defence: but when by this management, the fervour of our minds was for a time allayed, offensive war was resumed. The success at Charles-town and Camden made them forget they had made such declarations. A little good fortune made their hopes as sanguine as ever.

The country where the army marched was desolate; the rivers broad and deep; the passes frightful. Their provisions must have been carried through the wilderness. They had not
enough

24 THOUGHTS ON THE PRESENT WAR.

enough of boats for carriage by water, or of cattle for that by land. Was it not rash to have trusted to such precarious supplies? The devastations of the Indians increased these difficulties: it was rash also to have trusted them. The Indians assembled in the year 1775 to oppose General Montgomery, soon laid down the harchet. The experience of that time was confirmed by their deserting their post in October 1777.

Neither were the Canadians to be trusted. They assisted Montgomery in his attempt upon Canada. They too left their post, and laid General Frazer open to the attack which ended in the ruin of the army.

The Ministry blame the General; the General, the Ministry. They say his orders were discretionary; he, that they were peremptory; and they seem to have been as peremptory as words could make them. But to pass over this, the only good reason for this rout to New York was, that they were in hopes of great support from the planters. The expedition was idle upon any other idea. Without this, what advantages could result from forcing an inland passage to New York? Could they have kept so many posts at such a distance from the sea? There would have been a hazard of having some of these posts surprized or forced. This would have broke the chain, and have made the expedition fruitless. We have often found, that inland posts are not safe. These considerations might have demonstrated that the expedition was hazardous in the attempt, and useless in its consequences.

Much censure is passed upon the voyage to the Chesapeak. Perhaps with reason: and perhaps also all this noise may have been made for the sake

of those who planned the Northern expedition. General Washington would have attended Sir William wherever he turned his face; to Philadelphia, because it was that way; and to Albany, if it had been turned towards Albany. Was there no strong ground in that road where he could have rested in safety? General Clinton had a sufficient force at the attack of Fort Montgomery; yet he found it difficult, though the place was only half fortified, and the garrison weak. If the main army had been posted there, or on stronger ground, would it not have been a work of trouble to have forced a communication with the North? Or, if it had been driven from one post, was there not a second, a third, and a fourth? The country is rugged; there may be some narrow parts of the river where the victuallers would have been exposed to the batteries of the enemy, and it might have been very difficult to have collected provisions in that frightful country. These things are suggested as doubts, that Burgoyne's fate might have been the same, whether Sir William had made his attempt by the Chesapeake, or the North River. If he had turned towards Albany, the clamour might have been, Why did he waste his strength on ground where a hundred could stop a thousand, where there could have been no good from a victory, and no recovering from a defeat? At that time, the tongues and hearts of his countrymen were for him. The praises of the two brothers were rung from the palace to the cottage, the *par nobile fratrum*. We remember when the cry was, Take Philadelphia, and all is won: Philadelphia, the seat of the Congress, the city of plenty, the storehouse of their armies. We condemn now, what was the wish of every man at

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26 THOUGHTS ON THE PRESENT WAR.

that time. There was a regular enquiry into these things. Those who had served under Sir William gave their opinion in his favour; those under General Burgoyne, in his. They could have had no interested motive in their evidence; they could gain nothing by vindicating them; they might, perhaps, by condemning them. It was to their credit, that the considerations which weigh so much with the world, did not weigh with them.

Earl Cornwallis has met with similar treatment. A person believed to have been in favour was let loose upon him. The accuser seemed a man of information. His object was to prove, that the executive servants of the crown, and Earl Cornwallis by name, were to blame for our misfortunes. He seems to guard against attacking the Commander in Chief: perhaps it was thought dangerous, by his employers, to set him against one so powerfully supported. The Earl, however, was attacked with passion, if not with ill-manners. But the actions of Camden and Guilford had fixed that officer in the good opinion of his countrymen: and this opinion was not to be moved by assertions without proof, and arguments without force. The newness of the subject gained him readers, but he made few converts. I proceed,

5. To the consequences of these mistakes. By this new disaster, a great adviser of violent measures was forced to give way. After the convention of Saratoga it was generally thought impracticable to reduce America by force. However, Ministers still devised means for pushing on their schemes after this event. But by the second part of our misfortunes, they lost their power of persuading. Men would think for themselves, and

not see by the eyes of others. The Secretary, who had formerly breathed the strongest language, thought he could not, with consistency, continue in office. The other Ministers had used the same language, but they were not so squeamish. They told us, that the mode of the war was to be altered: but their language was dark, and might be applied this way or that, as might best serve a present purpose. This was their language when they felt sore upon the news from Virginia. When they had got a breathing-time, their stile altered again; for we were told, that great exertions were to be made. Great exertions imply something beyond mere defence. They thought themselves safe in playing the same game they had played after the convention: but the nation was not again to be trifled with. After several trials it was voted, that whoever in future was to advise an offensive war, should be considered as an enemy to his country. By obstinacy, the nation was brought to that pass, that our hopes now arise from having the right hand of Britain struck off. This is a melancholy subject; the empire is rent in two by the violence of a few, who would have absolute submission, or nothing.

But things were not brought this length by the single arm of America. If other nations had not interfered, they must have yielded at last. Our navy were masters at sea; their ports were blocked up; their army ill paid and ill clothed; and their only chance of standing depended upon support from Europe. This brings me,

II. To consider the French and Spanish war.

Pains were used to convince us, that we never should have such a war; and our projects of offence and defence were formed on this supposition.

28 THOUGHTS ON THE PRESENT WAR.

At first it was said, that the resistance of America was to be trifling. Disappointed in this, our leaders gave out that the cause was so odious, that none would take their part. Meanwhile, their ships freely entered the ports of France: or if, for a blind, they were forced to depart, they were allowed to return with the next tide. French officers of name entered their service; they neither were ordered home, nor disgraced. These were broad hints.

The convention hastened the discovery. Gentlemen of information gave the alarm. This was placed to ill humour, or to worse motives. This was in December, the treaty took place in February. Great offers were now to be made; but, alas! they were too late. If they had been made three months sooner, they might have prevented the treaty unfortunate to us and them.

It was weak to have thought the French would not have meddled in the quarrel. If we judge from history, we shall see, that states attend to their own interest, more than to right or wrong. In their open negotiations they speak the language of fair-dealing; but they act as if fair-dealing were out of the world. This is a bad account of the morals of many statesmen; but it is confirmed by the experience of every age. They arm, if a neighbour is arming; if he is weak, they take advantage of his condition; if he is powerful, they encourage the attacks of foreigners, and the revolt of subjects. Upon this footing, England and France fomented the revolt of Holland and Portugal. As Spain had been too great, their interest, and not generosity led them to take the part of the revolvers.

France

France had been much reduced by the last war; Britain had been aggrandized. Did common sense suppose the French were to slight the fairest opportunity of recovering what they had lost? They had built, and were building many great ships. This was no sign of peace. Why, then, did not we make up to our friends, before they had fettered themselves by that treaty? We then offered them terms little short of independence. Why were they not offered sooner?

It was argued, that France would not support the Colonies, for fear of their becoming too powerful, and wresting the islands out of their hands. But was America alone to be more formidable, than America and Britain united? Would they not rather imagine, that they would be so much wore out by this war, they would not be able to attack their neighbours for many years? It is likely they may fall out among themselves. The natural divisions of that country seem to have designed them for separate governments; and, a commonwealth of such a size falls in pieces, by the distance of one part from another. The French would observe these contingencies, and would not have denied themselves the satisfaction of humbling a rival, for fear of imaginary dangers at a distance. The Ministers and their friends were the only men who did not dread this interference. When the nation saw at hand a war with the house of Bourbon, Ministers affected not to see it: and, when forced from this strong hold, they supported themselves by boasts of vain-glory. Big words had failed them in regard to America singly; they boasted as much after this confederacy had been formed. Our navy was to drive them from the face of the sea. It had been better

30 THOUGHTS ON THE PRESENT WAR.

to have been forward in preparation, but slow in speaking. This united war was carried on,

1. In America.

It appears, that the fleet from Toulon was designed for America. Though it had a very tedious voyage, it had almost reached the object of its destination, before a fleet had left England to oppose it. Had the French been six days earlier, they might have intercepted our fleet on its passage to New York. If Lord Howe's fleet had been taken, or if D'Estaing had got before them to Sandy-Hook, in what situation would the army have been, which was fighting its way through the Jerseys to the Hook? Would the ships at New York, when separated from those to the southward, have been a match for the French squadron?

At this time a great alarm was spread at home. The French ships were clean, and well manned; the British foul, ill manned, and less numerous. Yet Lord Howe prevented an attack on Sandy-Hook, and relieved Rhode Island. His behaviour was such as might have been expected from an officer whom Mr. Pitt had trusted with the most difficult enterprizes. The French were on the coast near two months before Admiral Byron. We were saved at this time by the vigour and address of Lord Howe. Were our Ministers to be excused for not earlier sending off a reinforcement?

Had we a fleet fit for encountering D'Estaing on his second attempt on the continent? Providence, fortunately for us, shattered his ships, and he loitered on shore till a large reinforcement had got into Savannah. The garrison deserves much praise; but too much was laid upon them. It was improbable

improbable that less than two thousand men could have beat off seven or eight thousand.

Our force was not equal either by sea or land to the third attempt. The French had thirty-four ships of the line to twenty-five of ours. Therefore, instead of regretting that they did not leave New York in time, we may rejoice that they did not leave it, to attack an enemy so much superior. The loss of an army was very heavy; but the defeat of our fleet would have been much heavier, and not to be repaired. Even a drawn battle would have been equal to a defeat, as to Lord Cornwallis and his army.

Why was our army in Virginia, when the enemy had such a fleet at the islands? They had twice made an attempt upon the continent, to warn us of what we had to expect. Upon the taking of Charles-town our rulers expected the conquest of the five southern provinces. With this view the army undertook a difficult march, in hopes that every district was to pour out the thousands the Refugees had promised. If it had not been for these hopes, would they have taken the rout of the wilderness, when the sea was open?

What good were they to do in Virginia? Arnold had committed great devastation, but few joined him. He had boasted, that upon the junction of the two armies, they would over-run Maryland and Virginia. This junction took place early in May. De Grasse did not enter the Bay till the end of August. In more than three months the united army did nothing to verify these predictions. Sometimes they advanced, sometimes they retired. Their operations were on James and York River, a small district of Virginia.

32 THOUGHTS ON THE PRESENT WAR.

ginia. What prospect had they of conquering the two provinces? The army would have become sickly in autumn, and their operations more weak. They had done much harm to private estates, but they had gained no good footing in the province. There was no probability of conquest, though De Grasse had never arrived; and the utmost we could have done was to have kept a post or two. This was not an object equivalent to the keeping of an army in a place so unhealthy, and so much exposed.

2. From America we turn to the West Indies.

Though the French rescript was delivered in March, yet no force was sent to the islands till December. Six months after we knew of a French war. Dominica was stolen from us by two or three frigates. St. Vincents was taken by as small a force in the year 1779. Should not these places have been better prepared for defence?

In December 1778 a considerable force was sent from New York. Admiral Barrington took the command, set sail for St. Lucia, and though attacked by three times his force, he beat back the enemy at sea, and General Meadows defeated them by land. Between them they gained the island, an important conquest for its situation and harbours. How much have we to balance this? We have Grenada, the Grenadines, Tobago, St. Christophers, Nevis, and Montserrat, besides the two islands mentioned already. General Frazer, who made a spirited defence, informs us, that the fort at St. Christophers was old and ruinous. How did this neglect happen? One of the best of our islands should not have been neglected. They long had cause to dread a visit, and ought to have been prepared for it. The governors in this and the

the other islands seem to have done their duty, except the governor of Eustatia. If they did their duty, the fault must have been at home. Sometimes we had the superiority at sea, but we had no land forces to give it effect; and all we made of our superiority was, the picking up of some prizes. In 1781 we sent three regiments, who are now prisoners for the most part, though the enemy had sent a considerable army. Such a service required a more ample provision. But the reduction of America was the darling project, which starved every other design. If the forces, so long employed uselessly on the southern expedition, had been sent to the islands, we might have preserved our own possessions, and, perhaps, have struck a blow against some of the possessions of the foe.

It is on account of our trade that either the islands or continent are valuable to us. The trade of the islands is the most valuable, and therefore should have been preserved with care. Many ships and many thousand seamen are employed in that trade; many in procuring manufactures for that market; many hundred thousand hands at home in working for them. The petitions of merchants and planters were not heard, till the one half of our valuable possessions were taken from us. What have they to answer for who brought the kingdom to such loss and disgrace? We had a more extensive war in Mr. Pitt's time. We had superior fleets in the East and West Indies, America, the Channel, and the Mediterranean. This last we have now given up entirely. What a reverse of fortune! How happy is it that we have preserved the rest of the islands! If the fleet which sailed from Brest in December had not been forced back by storm, De Grasse would have had it in his power

34 THOUGHTS ON THE PRESENT WAR.

to have joined the Spanish fleet long before Sir George Rodney had arrived, in which case our fleet could not have looked them in the face, and Jamaica would probably have fallen. But thanks to that kind Providence which has so often interfered in our favour, they were driven back; our fleet had time to come up, and we fell upon theirs, when separated, and thus gained a distinguished victory. Our officers and men are to be praised. Never men did a more important service; they have recovered the fallen character of the nation; they have saved us, in some degree, from the ruin that hung over us. A grateful country will always found their praise. But had our Ministers a fleet in the West Indies which was equal to the united fleet, or which could have stopped their progress when united? That Minister is to be praised whose preparations are equal or superior to those of the enemy, or who gains the start of them in time. But the praise of taking advantage of circumstances must belong intirely to the chief commander, who by his activity makes a shining victory of what might have been a defeat. At present our fleet is strong and victorious in that quarter, but they are not seconded by land-forces, and their victory cannot recover our lost islands. If there had been four thousand men at hand, great things might have been done, before the enemy could recover from their misfortunes. If Earl Cornwallis's army had been in the West Indies, Britain would have triumphed, and recovered her antient glory. But things have always been done by halves.

3. The pretext, for weakening the Islands, was the maintaining the superiority in Europe. But we had not that superiority. On the first trial, we were barely equal to the French singly. Much

has been said on the subject of the first conflict, and much ill language has been used. The commander was unanimously acquitted by his judges, upon the honourable testimony of the first men in the service: the second was acquitted, but not unanimously. From these facts men form their own conclusions. Both sides take for granted that a second trial would have been decisive. From what we have heard of the damage done to both fleets, it is doubtful, whether we had cause to have looked for a decisive victory, if the action had been renewed. National prejudices form great expectations of what might have happened in particular cases, especially when their hopes are disappointed: when the fact is, that it is rash to trust to a victory, before it has been won; especially to one at sea, where wind, tide, and accidents often turn a victory to a defeat. Whatever may be in this, should not such a fleet have been sent, as must have made the victory compleat? But instead of this, we were once weaker, by eight ships: but to our good fortune, there was no action at that time, it might have been a sad day, if there had. The Minister had boasted, we were to be an over-match for the house of Bourbon. How soon were his high looks brought down, when, at the first onset, our fleet were equal, and no more, to the fleet of France alone!

At first we did great damage to their trade: but for more than two years our trade has suffered more than theirs; and we have reason to thank God for having escaped greater losses. The force at Plymouth, in the year 1779, was not equal to the defence of that place. The reinforcements had to come from a distance, and great damage might have been done before their arrival. But either

36 THOUGHTS ON THE PRESENT WAR.

their courage failed, or the weather prevented their landing, and our docks were saved. When the combined fleet was last in the Channel, rich fleets were expected from the east and west. The first were kept back by calms; the second, happily, had returned to Jamaica. Though the enemy was on the coast, when the sea used to be covered with rich ships, they had to return sickly and disconcerted.

We have had great success in two actions. In the first we added five or six capital ships to our navy, and took seven or eight from that of Spain. In the second we added six to our navy, and took eight from that of France; and what was still greater, we saved our principal settlement.

Fortunately for us, Spain, with a great fleet, has done little. Tedious forms and procrastination have wasted their strength. The war with them has lasted three years; in that time they have taken St. Philips, and alarmed Gibraltar, besides the conquest of West Florida. If they had had the activity of their allies, things might have been much worse than they are. Their fleets went harmless to sea, and came harmless back again. However, this was a powerful confederacy, and threatened us with great danger.

Before we had drawn this league upon us, we should have made up to our old friends; have forgiven their offences, and received forgiveness for our own. The confederates do not love us, neither do they love them, though it is their interest to keep fair with them. The slaves of the great king always hated the Greeks, because they were the sons of freedom. We saw the cloud gathering, and the storm about to break, but we did little to shelter ourselves from its violence. Besides the
allies,

allies, other nations wished we might be humbled. We too often, and too openly, claimed the honour of being masters at sea, and altered the law of nations when it was our pleasure. An universal dominion at sea is as odious in this century, as it was at land in the last. Our haughty tone, and the authority we assumed, gave rise to that treaty into which all the neutral nations have entered.

It is surprizing how easily we have been dispossessed of this dominion. We did not yield the empire of the sea, after many hard fought battles, as the Carthaginians yielded to the Romans. We were not destroyed by storms like the Armada of Spain. The power of the east fell at Actium; of the Turks at Lepanto; of the French at La Hogue. Even our late success has not put us on a level with our enemies. Our power slipped from us through the sloth of our rulers. Our officers, our seamen, have acquitted themselves like men, but the fault has been at home. Neptune fell asleep, and the trident was stolen out of his hand.

It is not long since the navy of the house of Bourbon was almost annihilated, and ours at its greatest height. How have they come up with us, and left us so far behind? Vast sums have been laid out in shipbuilding. What makes the enemy build and man their ships faster than we do? It was not so formerly. Was it the combination of the shipwrights? When your house is on fire, it is not the time of disputing about the wages of the firemen. Other labour hath advanced in price, and they only did what other labourers had done. In other things frugality was no part of the late system. This was the only article of frugality. Upon being refused here, are we sure they did not get their terms at a foreign market?

We

38 THOUGHTS ON THE PRESENT WAR.

We could not have lost our superiority, if our rulers had been as diligent as those of the enemy. We, and our dependencies, had a greater trade than the house of Bourbon. How came we then to have been so much straitened for seamen? Our ship timber is our boast; we are nearer the east sea for the supply of naval stores: for the want of these we have been often told that they were at a stand at Brest and Cadiz. How came they to do so much, and we so little, in the way of building and repairing ships? We want diligence, we have every thing else for us. With diligence every thing promises success. Our sailors are men of the greatest courage; they fight in defence of freedom, they fight like freemen against slaves. Our shipbuilders have skill; our docks and harbours are the best in the world: our ships are commanded by officers who learned to conquer, when Mr. Pitt was at the helm. Those who slept at the helm have left that post, and are gone where they may sleep in safety; and they have done wisely for themselves, happily for us; for the bed of sloth does not become the pilot of the state vessel.

*Necdum orbem medium, nox boris æta subibat:
Haud segnis strato surgit Palinurus, et omnes
Explorat ventos, atque auribus, aera captat.**

4. We suffered by our change of commanders. This affected the war with America first, and then the war with the family of Bourbon. In America our sea-commanders were, Graves, Shulldham, Howe, Byron, Collier, Gambier, Arbuthnot, Digby: in the Channel, Keppel, Hardy, Geary, Darby: most of them cried up for a time, but as

* *Æneid. III. 512.* suddenly

suddenly run down. Ministers appear against commanders, commanders against Ministers. This did not happen, formerly, to such a length. Does not a circumstance so inauspicious and unusual suggest blame somewhere?

At land, General Gage was praised for temper and military skill: he had his day. After the action at Bunker's-Hill we were lavish in our praises of General Howe. The official letters then sent to him are in the warmest style of panegyrick. The messenger of the operations on Long Island was not two days in London, when a title and badge of honour were bestowed on the General. After the convention the tide turned, and those who had been loudest in their encomiums, were the loudest in finding fault.

General Clinton's expedition up the river was praised: his merit was supposed to be enhanced by his retreat from Philadelphia. This retreat was made equal to that of the ten thousand-Greeks from Babylon to Trapezond; Sir Henry to Xenophon; the Raritan to the Euphrates; and the hills of Jersey to the mountains of the Carduchi. In a year or two all this was forgot, and abuse succeeded to encomium. His fame was raised a second time upon the reduction of Charlestown; yet now every serjeant boasts he could have done better than his General. Fame indeed is consistently foolish; it praises rashly, and spreads evil reports without enquiry. Generals Gage, Howe, and Clinton, have been recalled; General Burgoyne used harshly: Admirals Keppel, Howe, Harland, Byron, and Barrington, refused their service. Admiral Parker remonstrated on the state of his ships; he was not heard, therefore he threw up his command. Was it fair to the nation, to have lost so many
brave

40 THOUGHTS ON THE PRESENT WAR.

brave officers, for the sake of one obnoxious Minister? This man had neither in public or private life been so distinguished as to warrant this partial attachment. But though he had been a Drake, Raleigh, Blake, or Dorie, he should have given way to prejudice, and not have hurt his country by banishing from its service so many men of name. If these officers were unfit for their command, the Ministers were to blame for employing them; if they were fit, they were as much to blame for parting with them. The service must have lost by the change. At first, the General is not acquainted with the soldiers, or the soldiers with the General. The plan of one commander is not the plan of another. A new one hath a new set of advisers. The interval is a time of inaction, and the country suffers by the change.

These are the chief things that occurred in regard to the American, French, and Spanish war. We proceed,

III. To the Dutch war.

If we have blamed Ministers already, we shall blame them more now. States, as well as private persons, should pass over small injuries; otherwise there would be eternal pillaging and bloodshed. A man who brings on a war, without the greatest necessity, has to answer to every mother for the blood of her son, and to every wife for that of her husband.

The Dutch had no force ready at home, or in their settlements in the east or west; nothing for offence or defence. It was not known, at that time, that Hyder Aly was in arms; and it was reasonable to think, that part of our vast force in India might be sent against Ceylon or Java. In Ceylon they exercised a severe authority on a fierce people, who might wish for freedom. In Java, the Chinese,
mindful

THOUGHTS ON THE PRESENT WAR. 41

mindful of the massacre, would be ready to lift their hands against so cruel masters. The Spice Islands depend upon the government of Batavia, and would fall with it.

With these certain dangers they were too wise to begin the war. As for ourselves we cannot call this a war of necessity, or of self-defence: we had not to give them the first blow in order to disable them from doing the harm they designed. It was not a point of necessity, but of honour, which, though often the cause of war, is not rashly to be trusted in.

The first ostensible reason was the intended treaty of the city of Amsterdam: but that treaty had been disavowed, and they had engaged to prosecute the Pensionary, according to the laws of the country. Could they have punished him in any other way? The greatest criminal is not to be punished at short-hand. I suppose this is the case in Holland, it is certainly so in Britain: it ought to be so in every country. Those who had arrested the Muscovite ambassador, were not punished, because there was not a law to have done it. The Czar could not justly have made war on us, for our not doing what the law did not allow. Punishment without trial, takes place only in the worst governments. We should have given time for a trial, and if there were laws to which he was amenable, and they had not tried him, we might then have complained, and expressed our resentment.

Even at the worst this was a slight cause of war. It is not said that the intended treaty could have done us considerable harm. Therefore it had been better to have winked at it, than to have rested a bloody war on such a ground. We should be tender of real dignity, but false dignity is a

42 THOUGHTS ON THE PRESENT WAR.

most capricious guide; and is often obliged to lower its voice. Our dignity would not allow us to hear our colonists, but we soon were obliged to offer them terms more humbling, than any they had formerly requested.

It would have been too slight a cause for war, though they had not disavowed the treaty. I may go to law with him who hath injured me, but it would be madness to do the same with every one who bestows on him such offices of friendship as do me no harm. If the Dutch, or if even Amsterdam had engaged to assist America against us, we might safely have taken the first word and parried the blow. But it would stretch the laws of war to trifling cases, if men were to draw the sword for a draught of a treaty of commerce, not of war, to take place after Britain herself had acknowledged their Independence. No book on morals, none upon the laws of peace and war, give encouragement to such hasty measures.

We complain too of the breach of the treaty of 1674. By that treaty is defined, what is, and what is not contraband. Naval stores (arms and ammunition excepted) are declared not contraband. Yet Dutch ships, with these goods, were seized every day, before we had required the succours stipulated by treaty. We had no right to insist on the terms in our favour, as we had often broken the terms in theirs. Though they had been inclined to have given us these succours, yet they durst not give them, as this might have led them into a French, and us into a continental war, which we could not have borne in the present situation of things.

They had complained of a harsh memorial presented to the States some years ago, in which they had

had not been treated with that respect which one sovereign state owes to another. Perhaps the sting of this remained, and rankled in their hearts. Whatever was the reason, we did not retain their affection, and we might complain that they loved their former enemies more than their old friends. But though they were not friendly, it was rash to have considered them as enemies. It was too late to complain of the breach of the treaty of 1674, because we had already suspended it by proclamation, and had declared Holland to be on the footing of other neutral nations. The treaty was not in being by our own deed, and therefore could not have been a ground for declaring war.

We say that they carried on a trade to our disadvantage, and that the enemy could not have been supplied with naval stores without them. The other nations of Europe supplied them as well as the Dutch: and they are now as well supplied as they were before the Dutch war. The Russians, Danes, and Swedes carry every thing to them at this day, and we dare not touch them. The Dutch sold stores at Eustatia, so do the Danes at St. Thomas. Every merchant sells his goods to the best market, but this was never before made a cause of declaring war.

We may observe that the *induciae* ordinary among civilized nations were not allowed in this case. The Romans before they committed hostilities gave time to innocent persons for retiring from danger, and to the offending party to make reparation for the damage sustained. “* *Si non deduntur, quos exposcit, diebus tribus & triginta (tot enim solennes sunt) peractis, ita bellum indicit.*” Other nations

* Livy i. 32.

44 THOUGHTS ON THE PRESENT WAR.

have followed this example. As private persons are innocent of the quarrels of states, they should have time to provide for their own security, and for retreating from danger. The ships taken in the year 1755, before a declaration of war, were not given to the captors, but were disposed of by an article of the peace, and afterwards applied to the public service. If the war had been unfortunate, we might have been obliged to have paid for them, but the success of the war enabled us to dictate the terms of peace. We boast that we have greater humanity than our fathers had, but our abrupt and harsh manner of making war does not countenance the pretension. Humanity says that pillaging at sea is as bad as at land. There is nothing that condemns the one, that does not condemn the other. But custom makes it disgraceful by land, the same custom makes it honourable by sea; and the world is governed more by custom than by reason, or justice. But we have made what was hard before, much harder now: we have introduced a new custom, a new law of war. The honest trader is coming home in peace, with the fortune of his children and the effects of his creditors, he fears nothing but storms and pirates; but in this way he is ruined as effectually as he could have been by pirates or storms. This is against the treaty of 1674, which provides a certain term, in case they should ever after go to war. Formerly, on reprizals, the goods were kept; or sold, if perishable, and accounted for at the end of the war. But now a Manifesto is published on Monday, ships are seized on Tuesday, and condemned on Wednesday. Are they the friends of humanity, who make war more dismal than it used to be? Our times are polished, but men may be polished and hard hearted too. There were

were no proscriptions at Rome in its simple state; these were in the times of Sylla and Octavius; when the luxury of the East softened the manners, but hardened the hearts of men.

From seizing ships without warning, we proceed to the seizing of private property at Eustatia. This I believe is the first instance in modern times. When a city is taken by storm, the violence of soldiers cannot be restrained, whose wounds smart, or whose companions are expiring. Rage then gives the word, they break open every house, they spare nothing; they shed blood in all the wantonness of cruelty. There have indeed been generals who have prevented plunder, and bloodshed in a city taken by assault, and it has been their glory. But when the surrender is on summons, this is the first instance, for many years, of a city plundered by command. If it had been a place they could not hold, custom or necessity would have allowed them to have taken with them, or to have destroyed, what might be of use to the enemy. But when a place is held in a permanent manner, the seizing money, plate and such property, the searching of the books and correspondence of private men has not a preceeding instance to justify it, till we go back to the barbarous ages, when conquest and destruction went always together.

They were desired to surrender to prevent the consequences. What consequences did their surrendering prevent? The British have gloried in being a generous enemy, and were once generous beyond all their neighbours: but this affair, and their plundering in the East have lost them that character. Our enemy has adopted the generosity of temper, which formerly ennobled this land. We held the island about ten months, the Marquis de Bouillé

46 THOUGHTS ON THE PRESENT WAR.

Bouillé retook it by surprize, there was no summons, no promise of any kind : yet he gave up all private property, and with the rest the money of the Governor, which was thought in a great measure to have been made up of the late Eustatia affair. The French took Granada by storm, but they did not seize private property.

The apology for this affair is, that Eustatia served for a magazine to the enemy. Three fourths of the property seized was sugar, tobacco, plate or money, the fourth might have been naval or military stores. These stores ought to have been bought up for Government. This was all that the practice of war allowed. On this footing Munster, Osnaburgh and other places might have been plundered by us in the German war, as they had made a practice of selling provisions and stores to the French. Most of the merchandize at New York is for the use of our troops, yet would we not complain, were it taken like Eustatia, if it should be subjected to similar treatment ?

But though there should be nothing in this, was a new war a prudent measure ? The former confederacy gave us sufficient employment : was it wise to add the Dutch to the number of our enemies ? It is best not to take notice of an injury, when the resenting of it must hurt ourselves. By shewing our displeasure, we discover our weakness. Time has proved the imprudence of those who hurried on this affair. We despised the Dutch, as we had despised the Americans. We had seized hundreds of their ships with so little trouble, that we thought we had only to fire a single gun, and the largest ship in Holland would strike her colours. We also trusted that there were to have been insurrections in the seven provinces : but we soon

found that we had been much deceived in our opinions. The first time they met an enemy, they shewed bravery and skill, that would have done honour to the most warlike seamen. Several ships were kept from the most pressing service by this unhappy war. Had Admiral Parker's fleet been joined to Admiral Darby's, the combined fleet would not, probably, have entered the channel; or to Sir George Rodney's, Tobago, and the other Islands might not have fallen, the army might have escaped captivity in Virginia, and the nation disgrace.

It is said they have now twenty ships of the line. They lately put our coasts in great alarm. We have seen our great fleet at home employed in watching them. Were the injuries we complained of sufficient to have compensated for the diversion of so great a fleet, from watching the motions of our old enemies?

The nation was in a frenzy. The beginning of this war was thought the beginning of our happiness. We believed that neither the French or Spaniards could fit out a fleet for want of stores, and that their islands were to starve, on the fall of Eustatia. Addresses full of warmth came from every quarter, breathing defiance and reproach: as if the giving bad names were to make the arms fall out of the hands of the foe. But men yield to a sharp sword, not to a cutting tongue. The best ages are the most reserved in their addresses to men in power; and the most corrupted, the most lavish of their compliments: *Miro tamen procerum certamine decernuntur supplicationes apud omnia pulvinaria utque—aureum Minervæ simulacrum in curia, & juxta principis imago statueretur* *.

* Tacit. Annal. xiv. 12.

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48 THOUGHTS ON THE PRESENT WAR.

They were not the friends of this country who brought on this war. We regret that the offers of peace so lately given have not been accepted. It is now a matter of necessity to go on with the war; Holland hath bound itself to France. They deliberate in anger; the passion of the present hour keeps from them the view of the time to come. In this humour they do not see the danger of a connection, which may in time destroy their freedom and power. A small nation is often crushed in the shock of great ones. Their losses in India may serve to awaken them to their interest. We hope our late success will be followed by greater advantages, not for retaining conquests, but for forcing them from this alliance, by the restitution of such valuable settlements. What they have suffered already, and what they apprehend, may now make them wish for the terms they rejected. In India we have had much success, and from India our hopes of an honourable peace come. For the French and Dutch settlements are what we have to give for our losses in the West Indies. But whether they give us peace with France or not, we trust they may detach Holland. This happy event the lover of Britain and Holland prays for; we ought not to be separated: the good offices of two hundred years should not give way to the animosities of a few months. Let this quarrel be forgot. We helped them to become a free people in the age of Elizabeth, and from their country our freedom came in the age of William III. As we have been to each other the cause of the greatest blessings, let us join hands, and be ever after fearful to offend.

If their eastern settlements fall, one great source of their wealth and power must be dried up.

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They have already been wounded in this part; Hyder Ally being weakened, and a considerable force from Europe arrived, they have still more to dread. If the late offers of peace be made again after our success, they must see that our present rulers are not directed by ambition or covetousness, but by moderation and a love of justice. Peace is as necessary for us as for them, as it would leave us at leisure to attend to the motions of our natural enemies; and the exhausted condition of the country, half ruined by former extravagance, requires a breathing-time. It is wonderful we have so long stood out. The body must have been excessively strong at first, which could have born immoderate bleeding so often repeated, and so much tampered with by unskilful practitioners. This brings me,

IV. To consider the management of the public money during this war. Let the œconomy be ever so great, the expence of war is prodigious, and the consequence of it in this age is worse, by much, than it was in the last. Then war lasted no longer than there was a ready supply of money; but now the evil is permanent; the burdens of war are felt during peace; every shilling lays a weight upon our grandchildren, because the taxes only pay the interest of the money that hath been laid out. There should then be no waste, but the strictest frugality ought to be observed. Has our management been so cautious? A few facts may answer this question.

The last war required eighty or ninety thousand men in Germany: we paid a vast subsidy to the King of Prussia, and to other princes: we had a war in Portugal, in America, in the East and West Indies, besides casual operations on the

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coast of Africa. We made descents on the coast of France. Yet the expence of this war far exceeds the expence of that: and even then we complained, complained much of our debts and taxes; and with all our success we were like to sink under the burden. The friends of the late administration support themselves with affirming, that Mr. Pitt contracted as great debts as they have done. But that is not fact, though we should talk of the whole war, much less of the time in which he was Minister; for the debts contracted for the years 1755, 1756, 1762, and 1763, could not in the least have been laid to his account, as he was not made Secretary of State till the end of the year 1756, and resigned that office in October 1761, in which time near two-fifths of the debt of that war were contracted. The glare of victory made us bear our burden at that time, though we repined under it. We laid a weight on our posterity, because we expected, by an advantageous peace, to get back all we had laid out, and much more. But now we have been brought into much heavier expence, without victory to dazzle us, or the prospect of such a peace to indemnify us. In enlarging on this subject, I shall

1. Mention the improvident contracts that we entered into.

If they had been openly entered into, and the best possible terms obtained, there would have been no alternative but submitting to them, because we had done our best. But when they are made in a clandestine manner, and given to men, who, in all cases, have stood by their employers, we do not judge uncharitably in believing, that the public good gives way to that of individuals,
who

who know the time for making their acknowledgments.

Contracts are necessary ; but they should always be made on the most advantageous terms for the public. If, with an encumbered estate, a gentleman pays extravagantly for every thing, and he cannot contrive to contract his expences, his ruin is near. The national estate gives a mortgage of 175 l. for every 100 l. advanced. It requires, therefore, great management.

Young men in under-departments of contracts, have bought estates at 30,000 l. 40,000 l. and 50,000 l. They appear in the north and in the south, and put the old gentry to the blush by their extravagant stile of living. What sums have been made by quarter-masters, commissaries, and all that tribe ? Men, who began in poverty, now exceed in fortune some peers of the kingdom. They answer, that great fortunes were also made last war ; but the faults of last war are no excuse for the faults of this : and for one, last war, there have been three this. The Minister of last war had a sure support in the greatness of his own mind, and in the opinion of the people. He was not under the necessity of wasting money to make friends : the nation was drawn on by their admiration of the prodigious parts, the clean hands, and uncommon integrity of the first of modern statesmen, Pericles in eloquence, Aristides in love to his country. If fortunes were made that war, they were made by men out of Parliament. If profitable contracts were given, they were not given by way of exchange for influence ; and therefore, though money might be spent, it was not spent to hurt the constitution.

52 THOUGHTS ON THE PRESENT WAR.

Some of the contracts of this war were made with so little precaution, that the difference between sterling money and currency escaped the Minister, nearly the difference between five and three. The contractors for the loan of 1781, made 1,200,000 l. of clear gain; those of the year 1782, two-thirds of that sum. Both contracts were disposed of in a clandestine manner. Two millions were given as profits in two years to one set of contractors; the tenth part of which would have made a reasonable profit. Do these things become an encumbered state such as ours?

If we add the extraordinaries of the army, navy, and ordnance, to the vote of credit, there is a sum of near 6,000,000 l. a year, which is not accounted for. This is a copious fund for undeserved profits; and from this we may account for the great estates bought by contractors, and for the magnificence of their appearance. The excuse for not accounting for this sum, seven times made this war and seven times sustained, is, that the time is too short, and the distance too great, for making out a particular account; and therefore, that the draughts of commanders must answer for vouchers. Allow this argument its force, if we cannot in the year 1782 have the accounts for the extraordinaries of the year 1751, what is to hinder the having clear accounts for the years 1780, 1779, or 1778?

The Minister does not lay out his own money, or the money of the crown. It belongs to neither. Ministers are only managers for the public. A poor man, who gains a shilling by hard labour, must bestow two-pence of it for these extraordinaries. Ministers squander what is not theirs.

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THOUGHTS ON THE PRESENT WAR. 53

The guardian must not waste the estate of his ward, or the steward of his lord. I hope no body reckons the public revenue the patrimony of the crown. This language might be received in Russia, but it never will pass in England. An estate held in trust should be managed to the best advantage. If there are sound morals in the world, this maxim cannot be disputed: and what is unfair in private life, is unfair in public. The reason is stronger when the estate of the ward is encumbered. It little becomes the guardian then to give jobs to the butcher, baker, taylor, grocer, and double wages to the footmen. He ought to save every penny, till he either has discharged the debt, or at least till he can borrow on easier terms.

Have the stewards of the nation acted so fairly? Great jobs were given to a great man; small jobs to the poor friends of a great man. Every guinea that came through their hands, is a crown the lighter for their having the handling of it. In our circumstances these complaints are very serious.

It is said, also, that contracts are unfaithfully performed. Ammunition bread, ammunition rum, ammunition butter, is another name for bad bread, bad rum, bad butter. There are loud complaints of this sort, so often and so positively repeated, that one must believe there are grounds for them. The winter 1780 was excessively severe at New York; yet it is said, that the soldiers had not a third of their allowance of wood. A poor fellow who risks his life for six-pence a day, should have had something to warm him, and to cook his victuals amidst the severity of an American frost. Did government, then, pay for the full

54 THOUGHTS ON THE PRESENT WAR.

full allowance of this article? Did quarter-masters or contractors draw to the full? Were the beef, the pork, and other things, furnished good in their kind? Were they not paid for as if they had been very good? Was fault ever found with any of the contractors? It requires great faith to believe, that they all executed their contracts so, that there was never the least cause for blaming any of them. Whether they were well or ill executed, they cost the nation excessively high. And though we make allowance for the advanced price, freight, insurance, and a moderate profit, it is out of all reason to believe, that every man in America costs the kingdom above six shillings a day.

2. Every method of lessening the expence was opposed. The Ministers, one and all, were against the plan of œconomy proposed in the year 1780. The necessity was acknowledged by them all, but every plan of reformation was counter-acted.

Opposition contended, that the influence of the crown was too great. Ministers, and their friends, that it was necessary. The thing to be abolished was the influence of places, or the influence of money: that influence which arises from good opinion is in the heart, and laws cannot prevent nor bound it. The influence of money, on public measures, is corruption; a principle which the philosopher and the historian have made to be the destruction of good government. "Thou shalt take no gift: for the gift blindeth the wise, and perverteth the words of the righteous*." It is barefaced to argue for that influence. Money was

* Exod. xxiii. 8.

THOUGHTS ON THE PRESENT WAR. 55

given and received formerly ; and it is to be presumed, the giver knew why he gave it, and the receiver why he got it : the one bought, the other sold ; but the bargain was kept secret, and its effects denied : and the man who fingered three thousand, boasted that he was as free as the man who had not received a shilling. We must have fallen greatly, before any man could have the face to plead for corruption under any plausible name, and before such a doctrine could pass without observation. How would this doctrine have sounded in a Roman senate in the age of Fabricius ? It suited better the age of Tigellinus. The reformation was defeated by the united force of all the Ministers, and all their followers ; and we came to understand, that when the freak or interest of Ministers had created a new place, no straits nor change of circumstances could be a cause for abolishing it. The extravagance of our ancestors created some of them ; our fathers followed them, we follow our fathers ; and our children must have to pay for their own vices, for ours, for those of our fathers, and of our ancestors. Some great officers make 30,000 l. some 20,000 l. some 10,000 l. many 5,000 l. 4,000 l. or 3,000 l. Several of these offices are sinecures ; and, at times, are bestowed on children at the breast, or boys at school, who may be strong or weak, as their chance is. But strong or weak they pocket this money, and the poor of the land pay their share of it. Are these things proper in any circumstances ? Are they not shameful when our credit is at 45 *per Cent.* discount ?

We might have seen how little œconomy was the object of Ministers, when in the midst of an unhappy war we were burdened with 100,000 l.

56 THOUGHTS ON THE PRESENT WAR.

addition to the civil list, as if it had been to try how great a weight we could bear. We were told the dignity of the crown required this addition. How many changes have we heard rung on this word? Clean hands, public spirit, and a love of justice, form the dignity of the chief magistrate. He is the father of his people at home, and their champion abroad. Agesilaus had greater dignity when lying on straw, than Pharnabazus under a gilded canopy. Timoleon had dignity though he was blind; and had only one attendant, when the citizens pointed him out to strangers as the man who gave them freedom. Aristides, Phocion, Fabricius, and Epaminondas, were much respected though poor. Henry the Great was a man of dignity, even when he had not money to support his table. The dignity of a prince is not to have crouds of idle placemen, but to have the affection of virtuous citizens, especially in cases like ours, when the debts are excessive. When a gentleman is about advertizing his estate, it would be out of time for him to gild his carriage, double his attendants, new furnish his house, or throw the best of his fields into pleasure ground. Elizabeth was saving of the public money; yet she had ten times the dignity of James, who was extravagance itself.

The same pretext of dignity was employed against abolishing any of the old places. These places grew up in an imperceptible manner. There were no debts at the revolution; the revenue was small, and there were few to collect it. For every penny King William had to bestow, the crown has a shilling at this time. We may judge then of the power of a Minister in these days, when he has twelve times as much to give as the Minister

Minister of that time had. The borrowing money gives strength to the influence of the Crown, but it is a strength built upon the weakness of the people: and on this footing, the reducing of places is the bringing back of the constitution to that point where it was at the revolution, when the people had enough of power, and the Crown had not too little. But as if Ministers had not increased enough upon our necessities, art has been used to perfect this system of influence. In the reigns of William III. and Queen Anne there were a lord treasurer and a high admiral. Of these two places it has been contrived to make a dozen of commissioners. A third secretary was but lately made; they then divided this from the board of trade to furnish more places. The places are increased in an amazing degree, and the salaries of very many are greatly raised: and as if all this would not create a sufficient number of dependents, pensions were given by scores, and the nation has had near two millions of the debt of the Crown to pay to answer this, and other calls of the same kind. The strength of Ireland too has been wasted by the same arts. But is it common sense that placemen should encrease, as our power decreases? The people owe no favour to those who stood betwixt them, and the reformation of these abuses. The places necessary for the national business were never meant to be abolished; they ought not to be abolished, and the holders of them ought to be handsomely provided for. Their rank, their toil, their anxiety require it. It was only meant to abolish those places that served to swell the list, without being of any service to the nation. The Ministers of that time with all their force set their faces against ~~oeconomy~~ economy in every shape.

58 THOUGHTS ON THE PRESENT WAR.

Resolutions from which the people expected much good, were formed, but they came to nothing. The prætorian band, rallied after their defeat, and used such weapons as were not to be resisted. It is not easy to say how they came about: such things are not easily traced; such changes might have happened when Æmilius Scaurus ruled the senate, not when Fabius Maximus. The motives were bad at that time, it is to be hoped they were better at this. *Itaque paucis diebus, cum auro et argento multo Romam mittit, quæis præcipit, uti primum veteres amicos muneribus expleant: deinde novos adquirant; postremo quemcumque possent largiundo parare ne cunctentur.**

However, we have to thank God that the time is now come, when the groans of the Britons are heard. As we now see our rulers willing to spare us, we ought, as far as our power can go, to assist them with one heart and one hand: meanwhile let us observe some other parts of the conduct of our late Ministers.

Before a person can retrieve an encumbered fortune, it is necessary that he examine the state of his affairs. On this idea it was proposed to examine the public accounts; this was evaded as long as possible, but when the Minister saw he could not get rid of it fairly, he did what he could to make it harmless to himself, and to his associates. For this end, he takes the management out of the hands of the gentleman who had proposed it. A committee of accounts used to be formed by ballot; he avoided a ballot, because the private inclinations of many might be against him, however well they had been trained to vote openly for him. He got commissioners of his own naming to ex-

* Sallust. Jugurtha XIII.

amine his own accounts. This method did not promise much good: however, to the great credit of the gentlemen employed, they have done their duty so far as they have gone. They have framed reports with great ability and pains: they have found great balances in the hands of paymasters and receivers; and ways have been proposed for making the nation profit by their discoveries. Last year it was boasted, that by their labours, at least a million of money should be applied to lessen the navy debt; but this only turned out to be the pompous gilding of the yearly budget. Upon trial the Minister perhaps found his old friends loth to part with so good a perquisite, and did not chuse to push them to a measure that went against their hearts, for fear of consequences. No saving of great value has been made in consequence of this commission, though the commissioners have pointed out very important ones. From these facts may we not believe there was no serious design of saving the money of the nation, but that all this stir was made to quell the clamour of the people?

These commissioners never gave an opinion about the terms of contracts, or the manner in which they had been fulfilled. Sir Guy Carleton, as an officer of great experience, was qualified to have thrown much light on that affair; and so good a soldier would have had a tender feeling for the sufferings of those men who had served their country, many of them under himself. From the specimen we have had of them, they were well qualified for doing justice both to the nation, and to the contractors. It is a pity they had not instructions for searching the by-roads of commissaries, quarter-masters, contractors, and of

all who suck the blood of the veteran, or prey upon the vitals of the nation.

The great complaint arose from the extraordinaries; no account was taken of this sum. Here we might find the secret how such fortunes start up at once: these fortunes might have been curtailed, and the money found its way back to the national purse. The contractor and the nabob become great at once; perhaps it might not be for their advantage if the world knew the secret history of their fortunes.

The commissioners might find whether the treasury or the contractors are to blame, or both. The treasury is to blame if they give too good a bargain; the contractor if he seeks it; both, if they join in any thing that is unfair. Can a wise man bestow a too favourable contract without being suspected of an unfair connivance? Though not a merchant, he may, with the help of honest counsellors, come near the value of it: or by giving it to the highest bidder, the interest of all would prevent any one having too good a bargain. The commissioners were never employed in giving an opinion about these things: we hope that they and the parliamentary committee will now trace these things to the utmost, and that justice will be done the nation, and methods found out for extricating us from the difficulties we labour under. Things may be found out that were covered with darknets; the secret ways of corruption may appear before the people; the guilty may be brought to suffer, and the innocent to have their characters vindicated. We remember when every method for bringing these things to light was looked on as a symptom of disaffection; and when they only were reckoned the friends of the country, who defended

THOUGHTS ON THE PRESENT WAR. 61

fended a profusion without bounds or responsibility. But that time is now past, better days have begun to shine upon us; the good genius of Britain that seemed to have forsaken us, is returned to his post, and we hope that every thing will be to our wish: we have to look forward to these things, but it behoves us also to look back to the situation in which our old leaders left us; and for this end it may be observed,

3. That our debt has been increased, and our taxes multiplied, beyond the experience of former times. £12,000,000 were borrowed for the service of the year 1781, at the rate of £175 government security, for every £100 advanced; £13,500,000 for the year 1782, at £150. The whole for these two years is,

£12,000,000 at £175 per £100,	
for 1781 — — —	21,000,000
The Bank gave at low interest for	
their charter — — —	2,000,000
£13,500,000 for the year 1782,	
at £150, for £100 — — —	20,500,000
	£43,500,000

The debt has been increased £43,500,000 in two years, and the taxes nearly to £1,500,000 every year. This is exclusive of the unfunded debt which in these two years may bring the sum to £50,000,000. The whole debt funded this war is not much under £70,000,000; if we add the unfunded debt it cannot be much under £85,000,000, for which we have an annual rent of £3,500,000 to pay: if the war should last another year we shall have £100,000,000 of
new

62 THOUGHTS ON THE PRESENT WAR.

new debt, and £4,000,000 of new taxes. We have supposed that the war is to last only for another year, but at present we see no appearance of peace: a great sea is before us, a sea without a shore, and though the pilots now want to bring us into port, the storm runs high, the wind is contrary, the breakers are in sight; we must ride it out till the wind changes, and the hurricane is over. These are the consequences of a rashly begun and ill conducted war: now let us observe what we shall have to raise on the supposition of having peace next year.

It was lately affirmed that 40,000 persons are employed in collecting the taxes: if there are only 25,000, the expences of every sort in collecting and managing the revenues, must come to £1,500,000 at least. Then the account will stand thus:

The interest of the old		
debt — —	£5,000,000	
The interest of the new	4,000,000	
		9,000,000
Land and malt tax	2,700,000	
Excess of sinking		
fund — —	3,000,000	
Civil list — —	900,000	
Collecting the revenue	1,500,000	
		8,100,000
The annual peace establishment	£17,100,000	

How loud a call for frugality, I might say, parsimony! the nation bears its burden with patience: but it is provoking to have places and pensions multiplied, and added to our necessary burden. The labourer, manufacturer and farmer are double
taxed

taxed to build palaces for placemen, to fill their cellars, and load their tables: contractors must loll in chariots, though the bread should be kept from the mouth of our children to support them: let them live though we should starve; it is but taking another penny from what the labouring man earns with the sweat of his brow; and the courtier thinks that if he has money to throw away, there is no matter what the labourer may suffer: he thinks himself a creature of a higher nature: the poor man is not bone of his bone, or flesh of his flesh; if he strike him on the cheek, he must not feel it; though he abuse him with his tongue, he must not open his mouth: yet there is a measure in these things, and oppression persisted in may cause resistance; and when it begins, no body can say where it may end, or to what excesses it may lead. Our rulers never cared how heavy the burdens were they laid upon the people, as if they believed they would be the better subjects the less they had left them.

3. The new taxes have not, nearly, produced the revenue which was calculated from them. It is acknowledged that they failed at least £250,000 last year, and much more in former years; they, probably will fall this year short of the last, as there was a greater number than ordinary of India ships in the year 1781, and the capture of Tobago, St. Christophers, Nevis, Montserrat, Eustatia, Essequibo, Demerary, and Berbices must keep 40,000 hog-sheads of sugar, besides rum and other goods, out of the market this year, which were in it the last, and thereby lessen the old and new taxes.

We have been often told that the first lord of the treasury had great dexterity in calculating taxes: this deficiency does not answer the description. Most of the commodities had been taxed before:
of

64 THOUGHTS ON THE PRESENT WAR.

of this sort are the additional taxes on wine, spirits, sugar, tobacco, salt, malt, wheel carriages, stamp paper, &c. and the ten per cent. on the excise and customs: they made nine in ten pounds of the new taxes. The experimental ones (before this year) were for small sums. With these *data*, might he not have come nearer to the truth than he has done? Perhaps there was a design in this: if taxes had been laid on to answer the whole sum, the people might have felt their sores, much more than they have done, by laying them on in this way.

The deficiency, last war, was not the fourth of what it has been already, during the time of this. Upon these grounds, the praises so liberally given, do not seem well founded.

We have to add that the new taxes may lessen the old. There is another deficiency caused by this war, though it does not appear openly. By the advance of prices, men in ordinary life are obliged to live more sparingly: I shall illustrate the loss this may be to the revenue, by the example of port wine, and the same thing applies to every thing, in a greater, or less degree: port has been raised from fifteen to twenty shillings a dozen; on this account, I suppose, ten bottles are not drank for twelve formerly: suppose the whole duty was £28 a tun, twelve tuns at this rate would raise £336. There has been laid on this war £8 per ton, and ten per cent. which make £39 12; ten tuns raise £396, of which £280 is old duty, £116 new; that is, the old tax falls short £56, and the neat advantage of the new tax is £60, not £116, the sum that appears to have been made of it. We may add that the high taxes encourage the running of goods, and the quantity consumed of entered goods is lessened also by this consideration. The great fortunes made this war, and those made in India,

allow many to live in profusion, and may partly make up on one hand, for the saving that is caused among the people by the necessity of their circumstances on the other. But it is very hard that ordinary people should be pinched to pamper the commissary, contractor, or the plunderer of India.

4. Deceit was used to reconcile us to these taxes. When the second duty of four pound a tun was laid on wine, it was argued that as the publican or tavern keeper had raised his price six-pence a bottle on laying on the former four pound, when he ought only to have raised it a penny, he would therefore sell it at the same price after the second duty. But the fact was, that the bottle which cost the publican fifteen pence, was by freight, insurance, and the first tax, raised upon himself to eighteen pence, and on the second, to twenty pence a bottle; and in the same proportion it has been raised upon every man who buys wine for the use of his family.

To make the new tax of four shillings and eight pence on the hundred of sugar pass easily, we were informed, that this would only raise the price a half-penny a pound. This would have been true of raw sugar, but not of refined, which most consumers use.

When ten per cent. was laid on the customs and excise, soap was excepted, because it was necessary for the poor. Soap was to be taxed this year, and then it was found that the poor use ashes and lees instead of it. The reason against it one year is a reason for it another. The Minister must have supposed a wonderful want of memory in the nation, and a disposition to believe black white, and white black, as might serve the purpose of the day.

66 THOUGHTS ON THE PRESENT WAR.

The nation was uniformly deceived in regard to money. At first we were assured that the troubles were to be over in a few months. We did not start at two or three millions, for the pride of being masters of a great continent. After the first campaign, the word was, to such a leader and such an army, they would certainly yield in the year 1776. In the year 1777, the Southern Provinces were to fall with Philadelphia, and General Burgoyne was to make short work of the Northern. Thus we were taken in for a third year, and Ministers played a new trick upon us, every year of the war. Upon the disaster in Virginia, they for a short time gave over talking big, but they soon began to change their note to the old tune: and if they had continued in office, they would have tried to wheedle the nation for this year, and for many more. Did these shifts entitle them to the confidence or affection of the people? They had long abused it, in the end they lost it; we hope, lost it never to be recovered.

5. The chief taxes designed for this year were very hard ones. A family which has been burned out is very much an object of compassion. Humanity revolts at the loss on insurance against fire.

The medium premium on insurance may be about three fourths for 100 l. insured, the proposed tax was one shilling and sixpence: that is the tax is to the premium, as one to two. Was not this heavy for the first trial? The sum insured was calculated at 150,000,000 l. near ten times the value of the export, and fifteen times of the import trade of Britain. Is it credible that the goods insured would be ten times the value of the export trade for a year? There is cause to suspect
that

that there will be a great deficiency of this fund.

The tax upon inland carriage must have been hard, and unequal. When nature puts a hardship on any part of the subjects, the laws should rather relieve, than oppress them. Distance from the sea is a hardship of this sort. An inland manufacturing town or village is much less advantageously situated than one on the coast. They have to carry the materials for the manufactures from, and the goods back to, the coast. This would have been a tax upon local misfortunes.

The heavy tax proposed on water carriage might have prevented inland navigation, the great improvement of our times. The old canals might be used : yet probably new ones would not be formed : and if this tax should be productive, some future Minister, in search for funds, might add a little and a little to it, so that new canals would not be thought of, the funds for keeping in repair the old ones might fail, and we should only have the ruins to inform our grandchildren, that this was once a flourishing country. The taxes on carriage are calculated so high, that there is reason to imagine there will be a great deficiency.

We bore these hardships with so much ease, that it was thought that the old spirit of England was gone. But the lion was asleep, and not dead, and his voice has been since heard in the palace as well as in the cottage. When things were bad, and growing desperate, the country gentlemen threw themselves into the breach, and preserved the people. In their veins runs the blood of those who were always loyal to their prince, and guardians of the rights of the people. This is the chosen band for guarding the standard of liberty. We

68 THOUGHTS ON THE PRESENT WAR.

with safety shall cultivate our farms, as they defend us: and the freedom we had from our fathers shall go down to our children. A few chosen men are worth a host of mercenaries. When Epaminondas or Thrasylbulus took the lead, the people were safe. Their endeavours have been in part crowned with success, we trust that much good is still to come from the change.

We have at length got new servants to the crown. It would be rash to say much about their management of the war. The time has been too short for forming a judgment. They have begun with vigour, activity and some success: And we hope that the best effects will follow their measures.

We can speak with more confidence of the designs of peace, as they avow themselves engaged in a greater reformation than has taken place since the Revolution.

Notwithstanding the addition to the civil list revenue, the old Minister run greatly in debt, and this probably would have been the case to the last. This profusion is over, and the sovereign will be relieved from that distress which incumbered circumstances create in every rank.

We see many places already abolished, we hear many pensions are to be stopped. Extravagant salaries are to be brought to an ordinary size. Some of those who hold them for life have declared that they are willing to have their places curtailed. These are true patriots who are content to be poor for the good of their country. It is said that some men in the highest offices have sacrificed their emoluments. These are great examples, worthy of the best times of Rome or Sparta: we hope they are not visionary unrealized projects.

We are informed from authority we cannot doubt, that the savings in the Civil List are small to those in the other branches of the Public expence. The blessings of the people rest upon those men who prop our country in its declining age.

The saving the Constitution is the happiest of all circumstances. An attempt has been made to govern us by money; a thing unfriendly to freedom: the destroyer of public and private virtue: the ruin of every country that ever persisted in it. The gold of Philip first put an end to that spirit of liberty and enterprize at Athens, against which two millions of Persians could not prevail. When the Romans began to sell their votes, they became the worst of all slaves, the slaves of Nero or Domitian. Therefore they are the friends of mankind, who wish to lessen the influence of money upon public deliberations. The regulation of the household has made free above thirty members; the Contractors' bill not much fewer: when the other reformations shall have taken place, there may be above a hundred. This is a happy change, and is of more consequence than a score of victories. Victory might make us great, but this will make us free and happy.

It has been represented that the wheels of Government could not move without this influence. This notion is formed upon a disgraceful maxim, that every man has his price. We now see that this is a most injurious notion. Public spirit gives that unanimity which money never gave. Virtuous citizens do not stand by Ministers because they bribe, but because they want to cut the sinews of bribery, by putting it out of their own power, or of those who are to follow them, to do it with effect.

Contractors,

70 THOUGHTS ON THE PRESENT WAR.

Contractors, who grow rich upon our misfortunes, will not have it in their power to vote away our money, to humour their employers. Their friends say there hath been no delinquency; nor evidence of it. But whether there be legal evidence or not, there is evidence that is convincing: and, as one may turn off his steward upon a persuasion of unfair dealing; the public have the same right in regard to those with whom they trust their money. The contractor has the option of being contractor, or Member of Parliament. If public spirit, or the honour of being in Parliament, weigh more than money, he may give up his contract: if he values money more, he may make it his object. The same thing applies to revenue officers. If they please, they may throw up their places, and vote without any bias on their minds: but the nation does not think the representation free as long as so many voters must obey the treasury, or be discharged from their places. If positive proof of influence be required, it is impossible to get it; as influence is in the heart, and though we see the strongest symptoms of it, as we cannot enter the heart, we can have no proof thereof, and can do nothing to prevent it. On this principle, if it exist, it is a disease, without a remedy: though the pulse beat fast, the heart be sick, the countenance flushed, yet nothing must be done; as it is possible these may be false symptoms, and nobody can prove that the disease absolutely exists. Common sense untwists the knots of false learning, and common sense will get the better of the subtilties of law, or metaphysics. The man who judges from what he sees and hears, must observe that influence prevails, and all the logic in the world cannot persuade him out of his senses, or make him believe that

THOUGHTS ON THE PRESENT WAR. 75

that a thing does not exist, which he and every one is sure of.

The constitutional power of the Crown is not lessened by these regulations: as the constitution supposes that every branch of the legislature is to think for itself, and to do what to them appears to be most for the public good. The several orders of the state are a check upon one another, but their deliberations are not free, if they be determined by fear or reward. And, after all that is done, or intended, the places reserved are much more numerous than at the revolution: and the monarchy cannot suffer when it is acknowledged to have more power than it had at the revolution, and much more to bestow. The cause of humanity prompts us to congratulate our fellow subjects in Ireland on that clear establishment of their rights, which they have in great measure gained by a change of Ministers. We long held a heavy hand over that country. The Irish who are a brave, hardy, and spirited people, repined under their condition, petitioned often in vain, till their patience was worn out. Now their Parliament is a Parliament indeed; and an Irishman is as free as an Englishman: and it is reasonable he should be so. The two nations no longer stand in relation to each other of masters and servants, they are now kind hearted brothers. Our present rulers have made up the quarrel that threatened the ruin of both countries. If we had stood on the high terms which we used to dictate, the consequences might have been dreadful. There might have been a new scene of bloodshed, a second America, and so much more dangerous than the other, as it is nearer, and better prepared. This is a great period in the history of freedom: a great country is emancipated without bloodshed. Wisdom

172 THOUGHTS ON THE PRESENT WAR.

dom and moderation directed the counsels of both countries. The cause of jealousy is now removed, the affection that was interrupted, it is hoped, is now returning to its former warmth: and we trust that the struggle now is to be, whether we or they shall give the deepest wound to our old enemy.

How noble the spirit of Ireland. The moment they saw our generosity, they voted 20,000 seamen for the British fleet. They had warm hearts; they had received a great favour, they were uneasy till they had returned it. This vote gives strength to both countries, it brings weakness and disappointment to France and Spain. Britain and Ireland have joined hands; their swords are sharp, their hands are vigorous, their hearts are united. Well do they deserve of their country, who have disposed that arm to act for us, which threatened to have been against us.

The desire of the people seems general for a more equal representation. A plan for this purpose was proposed by the son of the great politician, who foretold that this rotten part of the Constitution could not outlive the century. As this young man inherits the abilities of his father, his being leader in this question, gives us hopes that he may inherit his public spirit and great mind.

He was well supported, and though success did not crown his first attempt, a second may have better fortune. I shall glance at some of the reasons for this change.

In the first place, many small boroughs are either under the influence of the crown, or of great men. The last influence is the worse of the two, as an Aristocracy is the worst form of government. For either the helm is put into unskilful hands; or if entrusted with a wise man, he

cannot steer steadily ; as he is jostled by many pretenders : and the vessel is in hazard of being run aground.

In the next place, if these boroughs do not receive the word of command, they are knocked down to the highest bidder at a sale. Hence so many gentlemen from the East have found a seat in the National Council. The soil of the East is not suited to the growth of freedom. It is the climate of oppression, European oppression, to which the tyranny of Aurengzebe, or Kouli Kan, was tender mercy : an oppression that makes white the hands of Cortez, or Pizarro. The fields want labourers, the cities artificers ; the prisons are full, the shops are empty ; the lash is over their heads, the thirst of gold thins their streets.

*Hinc exaudiri gemitus, et sæva sonare
Verbera : tum stridor ferri, traëque catena **

Wo be to the land, if men come from the speculation of the Carnatic, or the starving of millions in Bengal, to be the guardians of the people in Westminster !

However, furnished with lacks of rupees, they outbid their competitors, and are chaired at elections, and will be chaired as long as they are allowed to scatter their guineas among needy corporations.

A borough is the field of corruption. Bribery is difficult in counties and great towns. Who could bribe eight or ten thousand voters ? In counties, the gentleman of the most amiable manners, and of the greatest public virtue, probably, will carry the day : for generally the people judge properly of public men, if they be not blinded by interest. To make this the more effectual, it was

* *Æneid.* 6. 557.

74 THOUGHTS ON THE PRESENT WAR.

designed to prevent opening houses at elections for the entertainment of voters. At present an election meeting is a scene of riot and dissipation; a scene of drunkenness, gluttony, and indecency; ruinous to the fortunes of the candidates, and destructive of the morals, and industry of the electors.

In great towns, the merchant of fairest name, and most engaging behaviour will gain the hearts of his fellow citizens: and it is reasonable to believe, that a public trust may be safely given to him, whom they have seen just in his dealings, kind to the poor, humane to his dependants, and respected, as a magistrate or a private man. These men promise to be friendly to their Country. It is their own interest that it should be free. It was from commerce that the beginnings of freedom arose, and if commerce do not support liberty, it must destroy itself.

It has been said, that the Constitution is best as it is, and that it is dangerous to tamper with it on any pretext.

Upon this footing things can never be better than they are: and, though the body politic be attacked by new diseases, we dare not adopt new cures; but allow the body to rot away limb by limb, rather than stop the mortification, by methods unknown to our fathers. Common sense opposes this doctrine: and the experience of the wisest nations is against it. The laws of Lycurgus formed the original constitution of Sparta: yet the institution of the Ephori altered that constitution very materially. Now this change was for the better: for it was under the new establishment, that they humbled the great king; maintained their rank among their neighbours; produced

THOUGHTS ON THE PRESENT WAR. 75

duced Leonidas, Cleombrotus, Agesilaus, and many other great names, which adorn their history.

The first Consuls at Rome had the power of kings. An appeal to the people was afterwards allowed; Censors, Dictators, Prætors, Ædiles and Tribunes, were introduced with new powers: the election of some magistrates was transferred from the centuries to the tribes; that is from the nobles to the people: plebeians were admitted to all offices of state. Appius stormed, and the haughty Patricians clamoured that Rome was undone: yet it increased in number, it extended its dominions: her commanders were wise, her soldiers brave, her citizens virtuous.

We have also instances of changes in the Constitution of this country. The language held now was held at the revolution of 1688. Touch not the fabrick of our fathers: if you loose a pin, it will fall about your ears. Time, however, has shewn, that a tottering building was propped up, and not a strong one pulled down. The Constitution of the northern part of the Island was essentially altered by abolishing feudal vassalage. That system, too, had its advocates, who prophesied that anarchy was to be the consequence. But, on trial, it was found that that was the first day of their emancipation from slavery: the vassal was freed from oppression, and the courts of justice from partiality. How much was the Constitution altered by the union of the two kingdoms? How much by the act of settlement, and by the act for prolonging the duration of parliaments? What alterations could have been more material than these?

76 THOUGHTS ON THE PRESENT WAR.

Hath not this generation as good a right to amend what is wrong as former ones had? Nothing is so fixed, but it may be altered upon a change of circumstances. If an evil exist in our days, which did not exist in the days of our fathers, it must be removed by us upon as good grounds as they removed their grievances. There was no occasion for the reformation before the evil began.

When the representation was fixed, probably, the small boroughs were places of consequence. Old Sarum might have borne some proportion to London. But now the one raises many thousand times a greater proportion of the taxes than the other. Is it reasonable that it should have an equal voice with Yorkshire in laying them on, and half as much as London? The county, or great town, sends two independent members; the small borough two deputies of a minister, or of a great man, who hear, see, and speak as they have got their lesson. What good is to be looked for from this quarter?

If in the changes of time, London should become a village, and what is now a village be the place of trade, and the seat of government, the new city ought to take the lead, and London to bring up the rear. It is to be hoped, that this important object of legislation will again be seriously considered, and settled in such a manner, as to afford an additional security for the permanent enjoyment of our rights and liberties.

As the spirit of reformation is gone abroad, it is to be hoped that Scotland may come in for its share. The representation of that country has always been on an aristocratic plan; for one free-
hold

THOUGHTS ON THE PRESENT WAR. 77

hold qualification there, requires nearly seventeen times the rent it does in England. This does not easily admit of a cure: but the Aristocracy has been of late made much more formidable, by a temporary conveyance of superiorities without a landed estate. This makes the great families carry every thing before them. In the northern counties, particularly, by these fictitious votes, they return what members they please, and make the gentlemen of the country insignificant. It is the sincere wish of thousands, that our rulers may turn their eyes to this capital grievance, which keeps the country in an entire dependence.

The reformation going on, is of as great service to the Sovereign as to the people: for it shews that the King and people have but one interest. Some men called themselves the King's friends. This wheedling denomination conveyed a most injurious insinuation, that the interest of the King is different from that of the people. God forbid that the King's friends should be confined to a few hundreds. He has ten millions of friends in Britain and Ireland; who look upon his interest as theirs, for he looks on theirs as his.

The private virtues of the king have been long known; but some persons for interested purposes hid the public virtues of the King from the people, and the loyalty of the people from the King. Now we see his public virtues are equal to his private ones: these render his family happy, the former his kingdom. He now sees that the loyalty of affection alone is to be depended on; this gives an influence without bounds: for the people will not be overcome in good offices even by their Sovereign. He can say to the people, These are my children:

78 THOUGHTS ON THE PRESENT WAR.

children: and the people can answer, This is our father.

Long after we shall have fallen, asleep in the grave, may the faithful historian record these changes, as happy, and have reason to inform posterity, that the Constitution was saved, and public virtue restored in the twenty-second year of the reign of George III.



F I N I S

